

Support Services Committee
11 November 1997

Irvine, 11 November 1997 - At a Meeting of the Support Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

David O'Neill, Alan Munro, James Clements, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, Elliot Gray, Margaret Highet and David Munn.

In Attendance

The Head of Corporate Business, Director of Financial Services, Architectural Services Manager, Personnel Services Manager, Legal Services Manager, Information Technology Services Manager, and J. Bannatyne, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. O'Neill in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Patrick Browne, George Steven and Richard Wilkinson.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Support Services Committee held on 30 September 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Collection Statements

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the current collection levels in respect of Community Charge and Council Tax for the period ended 31 October 1997.

A total of £97,000 was collected in respect of Community Charge during October 1997 which compares favourably with the amount of £72,000 collected in October 1996. The outstanding recoverable debt due to North Ayrshire Council in respect of Community Charge is £17,535,000.

£2,825,000 was collected during October 1997 in respect of Council Tax for 1997/98. The outstanding recoverable debt due to North Ayrshire Council in respect of Council Tax is £16,952,000.

Noted.

3. Revenue Budget Control Report for Period 1 April to 10 October 1997

Submitted report by the Director of Financial Services on the Revenue Budget position for Support Services at 10 October 1997 against an agreed budget profile including a projection to 31 March 1998.

The Corporate Strategy Committee on 21 October agreed that Service Committees should receive information on their own budgetary position at regular intervals and that when appropriate Service Committees should identify savings within their operations to bring actual expenditure back to budget.

Current figures at 10 October 1997 indicate that the Support Services Budget is presently operating at an overspend of £264,000. Projections indicate that an overspend of £306,000 will arise by the end of the current financial year which represents an overspend of 2% on the annual budget for these services. Details were provided of the major elements of the variances as at 10 October 1997 and 31 March 1998 together with an objective analysis of these figures.

The Committee agreed to remit to the Chair, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Director of Financial Services, to identify measures to rectify the situation and to report to the Corporate Strategy Committee on 26 November 1997.

4. Data Protection Code of Practice

Submitted report by the Information Technology Services Manager on the introduction of a code of practice for data protection.

The Council is legally governed in its use of personal data by the Data Protection Act, 1984 and it is essential for members and officers to be aware of their legal responsibilities when using personal data. The Code of Practice provides requisite guidance on this and forms an essential part of the Council's overall strategy for security and integrity of the information which is processed.

I.T. Services will co-ordinate and conduct Corporate Training Sessions for Departmental I.T. Co-ordinators who will in turn pass on the relevant training. Members who use I.T. systems will also be issued with a briefing note outlining the considerations of the Act to supplement the Code of Practice.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Code of Practice; and (b) to instruct the I.T. Services Manager to effect its introduction throughout the Council.

5. Sub-Committee on Severance Arrangements: Minutes

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix SS1) being the Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Severance Arrangements held on 30 September 1997.

Noted.

6. Education Directorate: Teaching Staff: Documents Relating to Policies and Procedures

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposals for the introduction of policies and procedures in relation to teaching staff in respect of (i) Statutory Maternity Pay/Maternity Allowance and Leave Provisions; (ii) a Job Sharing Scheme; and (iii) Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures.

Since 1 April 1996, the Council's Education Directorate has continued to operate in accordance with procedures and guidelines established for teaching staff by the former Strathclyde Regional Council. These procedures have now been reviewed with the dual aim of encompassing recent amendments to employment legislation and reflecting best employment practice and the revised policy and procedural documents formed part of the report. These measures will have no direct financial implications for the Council and consultations have already been undertaken with the appropriate Trade Unions.

The Committee agreed to adopt the policies and procedures within the revised documents.

7. Community and Recreational Services Directorate: Reduction of Manual Workers' Working Week: Community Halls Caretakers

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposals to reduce the working week for hall caretakers.

The Scottish Council for Local Authorities Circular MW/137 introduced in 1992 provides a framework agreement for Local Authorities to achieve a 37 hour working week for manual employees focusing local negotiations on how this can be achieved within existing overall local costs. Community Centre supervisors within the Community and Recreational Services Directorate currently work a 37 hour week as negotiated within that framework agreement during their employment with the former Strathclyde Regional Council. Hall caretakers do not have such an agreement and currently work a 39 hour week.

The report presented specific proposals as to how the working week could be reduced in the case of each community hall whilst maintaining existing overall local costs and complying with the framework agreement. The reduced working hours are mainly achieved by adjustments to workload during non letting periods or by minor changes in the starting times of letting sessions and are based upon current practice.

The proposals also require:-

- a 39 hour calculator for the purpose of enhanced, unsocial or additional hours worked;
- agreement for a 3 month period initially, with a review of the operational costs at the end of the period to assess that the agreement has been achieved within the Nationally agreed framework and within existing overall local costs; and
- a successful review after the 3 month test period, confirmation of the

agreement in writing to Hall Caretakers and their respective Trades Union.
The Committee agreed to approve these proposals in full.

8. Community and Recreational Services Directorate: Application for Special Leave

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a request for unpaid leave of absence which in terms of the Scheme for Special Leave requires Committee consideration.

The request which has been submitted by an employee within the Museum Services Section for a period of unpaid leave of absence from 6 October to 3 July 1998 to attend a full-time course of study leading to an HNC qualification in Countryside, Recreation and Conservation Management, is supported by the Director of Community and Recreational Services.

The Committee agreed to approve this request.

9. National Joint Council Circulars and National Agreements: Amendments to Conditions of Service

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposals for the adoption and implementation of amendments to conditions of service in relation to fees for Returning Officers, following agreement by the relevant national negotiating body.

Agreement has been reached nationally on conditions of service issues as detailed in Circular CO/127 - Fees for Returning Officers, to be implemented with effect from 1 April 1997. This will result in changes to terms and conditions of employment which will impact on employees of the Council but any financial implications will be contained within current revenue budgets. Trade Unions have been consulted at national level.

The Committee agreed to approve these amendments.

10. Early Closure of Administrative Offices and Magnum Leisure Centre on Hogmanay

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on a proposal to close administrative offices of the Council and the Magnum Leisure Centre early on Wednesday 31 December 1997.

In 1996 the Council closed administrative offices, branch libraries and leisure centres early on 31 December.

This year an agreement has already been reached that all branch libraries and leisure centres (excluding the Magnum) will close during this years' Christmas period as part of the budget savings required by the Community and Recreational Services Directorate and the Committee was therefore asked to consider allowing the Council's

administrative offices to close at 1.00 p.m. and the Magnum Leisure Centre at 6.00 p.m. on 31 December 1997 in line with previous practice. There are no direct financial implications to this proposal.

The Committee agreed to approve these proposals.

11. Review of Ayrshire Careers Partnership

Submitted report by the Personnel Services Manager on proposals resulting from a recent review of the proposed salary gradings for the staff structure within Ayrshire Careers Partnership.

Prior to the demise of the former Strathclyde Regional Council a review of salary gradings for staff in the careers service was undertaken and a report which was subsequently submitted by the then Director of Education was approved by the former Personnel Services Committee on 24 October 1995, subject to consultation with Trade Unions. The former Regional Council had subsequently been unable to reach agreement with the Trade Unions and although the report was agreed by North, East and South Ayrshire Councils, the proposals could not be implemented.

The Ayrshire Careers Service currently operates within a Joint Working Agreement consisting of the 3 Ayrshire Councils and is managed through a partnership board. The service is funded solely by the Scottish Office although the staff are employed by each of the 3 Ayrshire Councils. The Trade Unions involved have made representations to each of the 3 Ayrshire Councils for the re-examination of the staffing review with a view to establishing appropriate salary gradings for all career service staff throughout Ayrshire. A Working Party comprising representatives of the 3 Councils has now considered the issues raised and following consultation with the Trade Unions a further review has been undertaken, full details of which were provided in the report.

The full costs of the revised gradings will be borne by the Ayrshire Careers Partnership via funding from the Scottish Office and implementation of the proposals will be subject to agreement with Unison. The Ayrshire Careers Partnership Board supports the proposal and has agreed to underwrite the full year costs of £90,000 and up to a maximum of £30,000 in the current financial year subject to (i) the role and job description of the Assistant Principal Careers Officer being adjusted to take account of the recommendations of the review; and (ii) a new job description being prepared for the Career Service Manager with the post being filled on a competitive basis in view of the substantially increased salary proposed.

The Committee agreed to approve these proposals.

12. Disposal of Garden Ground/Open Space Areas

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager seeking authority to negotiate provisional terms for the disposal of plots of ground to adjoining residential proprietors to extend their garden ground, without initial reference to the Committee.

After full discussion, the Committee agreed to continue this item for a further report to the next meeting to clarify a number of points raised by Members.

13. Land to the West of “The Keys” Public House at Harbour Street, Irvine

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request for the sale of land to the west of “The Keys” Public House, Harbour Street, Irvine.

The Committee agreed that the Legal Services Manager enter into negotiations with Eagle Taverns, Paisley for the sale of the land.

14. Shop Unit at 22 Bridgegate, Irvine

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of the shop unit at 22 Bridgegate, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to homologate the Chair’s actions in authorising the lease of the above premises.

15. Sub-Station Site: McKinlay Crescent, Irvine

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed disposal of the Sub-Station Site at McKinlay Crescent, Irvine

The Committee agreed (a) to dispose of the property on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager; and (b) to add a further condition requiring the purchaser to keep the site in a condition acceptable to the Council.

16. Ground to Rear of 251 Bank Street, Irvine

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of ground and superiority of ground to the rear of 251 Bank Street, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the disposal of ground and superiority on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

17. Day Respite Accommodation: Pavilion 4, Ayrshire Central Hospital, Irvine

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the lease of property at Pavilion 4, Ayrshire Central Hospital, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

18. Irvine: 174A Harbour Street: Rent Review

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of 174A Harbour Street, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

19. Irvine: Bridgegate House: Rooftop Radio Installation

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on proposals by Messrs. Orange PCS Limited and Mercury Personal Communications to replace telecommunication equipment on Bridgegate House, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals on terms provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

20. Irvine: Kilwinning: Disposal of Former Cemetery Houses

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of the former Cemetery Houses in Irvine and Kilwinning.

The Committee agreed that the subjects be advertised for sale on the open market.

21. Irvine: 20 Gottries Road: Shop Property: Assignment of Lease

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on an assignment of lease of shop property at 209 Gottries Road, Irvine.

The Committee agreed to the assignment of lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

22. Kilwinning: Bridgend/Bridgend Lane: Sale of Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of land at Bridgend/Bridgend Lane, Kilwinning.

The Committee agreed to the disposal of land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

23. Stevenston: Former Janitors' Houses at Auchenharvie Academy

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on future proposals for the former janitors' houses at Auchenharvie Academy, Stevenston.

Two semi-detached former janitors' houses at Auchenharvie Academy were declared surplus to requirements by the Education Committee in August 1996. Since no

interest had been expressed by Directorates or services within the Council, the houses, which are in need of repair and refurbishment, were advertised on the open market with considerable public interest being shown. There were however reservations about the sale of the properties and they were taken off the market. Prospective purchasers were advised accordingly.

Following investigation, the Legal Services Manager has now confirmed that it would not be feasible to impose any restrictions in the title deeds on either who would be permitted to purchase the properties or and future restrictions as to whom the houses might then be sold or let. In the circumstances the following options are available:-

- (i) to proceed to sell the properties on the open market with the resultant loss of control of who would be living in them;
- (ii) the retention of the properties in their present boarded up state for an indefinite period until the Council can find a future use for them, although they would continue to deteriorate; and
- (iii) to demolish the properties which would resolve the issue of being unable to control those living in the properties within the school campus. The financial implications of this option would be the potential loss of a capital receipt estimated at between £15,000 and £20,000 with an additional cost of demolition amounting to £9,000 inclusive of professional fees. No budgetary provision has been made for demolition costs.

The Committee agreed to approve the demolition of the properties.

24. Saltcoats: A78 Trunk Road: Sale of Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of various plots of ground in Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston.

The Committee agreed to the disposal of the various plots of ground on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

25. Saltcoats: 53 Wellpark Road: Sale of Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of property at 53 Wellpark Road, Saltcoats.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Legal Services Manager to negotiate the sale of the ground with Messrs. Wylie Construction Ltd.

26. Saltcoats: 111 Dalry Road: Sale of Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the disposal of land at 111 Dalry Road, Saltcoats which the Community and Recreational Services Directorate has declared surplus to requirements.

Mr. James Conlin, the owner of 111 Dalry Road, is disabled and has asked to purchase this land which is adjacent to his property to secure vehicular access.

The Committee agreed that the land be sold to Mr. Conlin.

27. Ardrossan: Purchase of 119 Glasgow Street

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on proposals to complete the Council's title to the property at 119 Glasgow Street, Ardrossan to allow its sale to Cunninghame Housing Association.

The Committee agreed to approve these proposals.

28. Dalry: Catburn Farm: Rent Review

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of Catburn Farm, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

29. Dalry: Routdaneburn Farm: Rent Review

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of Routdaneburn Farm, Dalry.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

30. Kilbirnie: Moorpark Fields: Rent Review

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of Moorpark Fields, Kilbirnie.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

31. Kilbirnie: Lease of Unit 4, Block 2, River Place

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a lease of Unit 4, Block 2, River Place, Kilbirnie.

The Committee agreed to the lease on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

32. Beith: Marshallands Grazings: Review of Rent

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a rent review in respect of Marshallands Grazings, Beith.

The Committee agreed to the rent review on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

33. West Kilbride: 50 Kirkton Avenue: Sale of Adjacent Land

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the sale of land adjacent to 50 Kirkton Avenue, West Kilbride.

The Committee agreed to the sale of land on terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

34. Largs: Wilson Street: Sub-Station Site

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the proposed disposal of the sub-station site at Wilson Street, Largs.

The Committee agreed (a) to dispose of the property on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager; and (b) to add a further condition requiring the purchaser to keep the site in a condition acceptable to the Council.

35. Largs: South Esplanade: Mackerston Kiosk

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on a request for a new lease in respect of the property at Mackerston Kiosk, South Esplanade, Largs.

The Committee agreed to approve the new lease on the terms and conditions provisionally agreed by the Legal Services Manager.

The Meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.